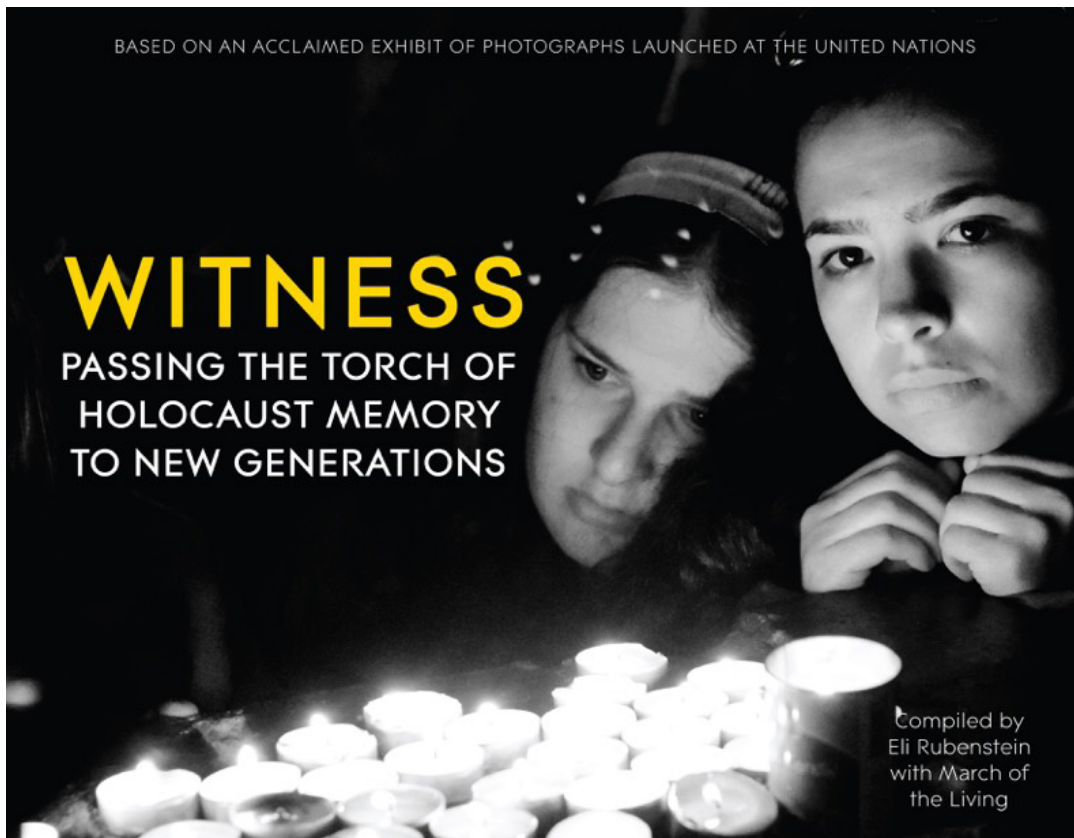


Second Story Press

Teaching Guide

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WITNESS

PASSING THE TORCH OF HOLOCAUST MEMORY TO NEW GENERATIONS

by Rosemary McCarney with Plan International

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SUMMARY

This book serves as a document for the March of the Living program, which, for twenty-five years has been organized for adults and students from around the world to visit Poland where they can learn about the millions of Jews who were enslaved and murdered by Nazi Germany during WWII. Through verbal text and powerful photographs, *Witness* helps readers not only to remember and bear witness to past events, but also to look forward and work toward building a world free of oppression and intolerance.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES


History	World War II; the Holocaust Connecting the past to the present
Social justice, diversity, and equity	Human rights
Tolerance	Dangers of intolerance, prejudice, and hate
Religion	Recognizing and respecting multi-faith beliefs
Genocide	The Holocaust
Bearing witness	First-person narrative
Literacy	Responding to multi-modal texts (poetry, quotations, narrative, information)
Media	Interpreting photographs

KEY VOCABULARY


Holocaust
Genocide
Tolerance
Resistance
Legacy
Anti-Semitism
Ideology

PREPARING TO READ *WITNESS*

The following suggested activities are designed to activate students' prior knowledge of the Holocaust. Student responses can inform the teacher of the possible need to provide further historical information to the students.

-  Chapters One and Two of *Witness* will help to explain:
- What Happened and to Whom? (Chapter One);
 - Where it Took Place and Who Let it Happen? (Chapter Two).

Activating Prior Knowledge

-  The following activity can be done as a whole class or by having the students working in small groups to create a T-chart.

Ask the students:

What do you know about the Holocaust?	What are some questions you have about the Holocaust?

Defining Key Vocabulary

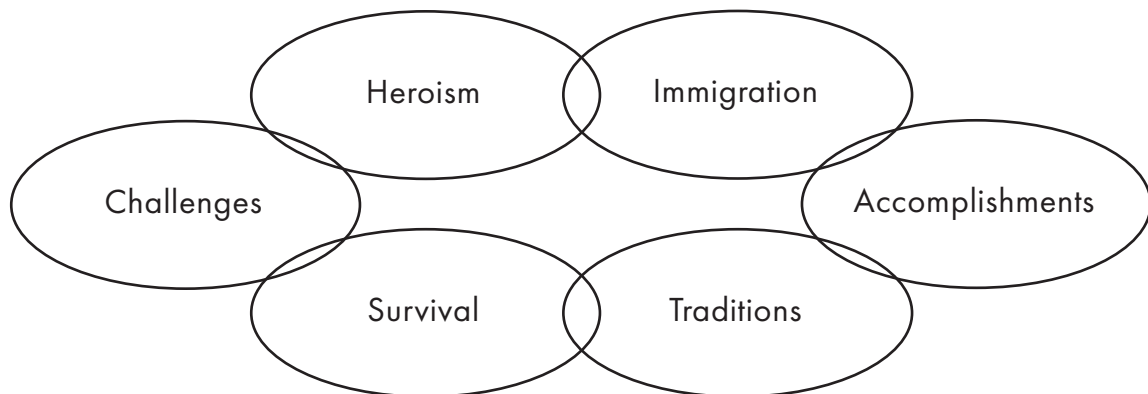
Present the key vocabulary listed above to the students.

- a) Working in pairs, students can prepare a definition of one of these terms. As a follow-up, students can use personal devices to research the definitions and compare them to their own.
- b) Students meet in groups of six to eight. Each pair shares the definition that they have written and/or researched. Students present prior knowledge and/or experiences that connect them to one or more of these terms.

Building Connections

Personal Narrative

- a) Invite students to share a family story that has been told to them by their parents and/or grandparents or other relatives. The story might be about a particular person, event, or place. Some suggested topics to inspire the students:



- b) Students work in small groups to share their stories. As a follow-up some students might choose to share their story with the whole class.


Ask the students:

Why did you choose this story to retell?

Why is it important to pass these stories on from generation to generation?

- c) After telling the story, students can record their memoir in written form in the third person or they might imagine that they are the family member and retell the story in the first person.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1 Draw students' attention to the photograph on page 10 that depicts Jewish Ghetto citizens who are being marched for deportation to a camp.
 - What information do we learn about this period of history from this photograph?
 - What do you notice about the people in the centre of the photograph?
 - What do you notice about the soldiers?
 - What do you wonder about when you examine this photograph?
-  The activity can be repeated for the photograph on page 11.
- 2 The following words are written on the jacket to *Witness*:
 - "Holocaust survivors are aging. Once they are no longer able to, who will tell their stories?"*
 - What are some answers to this question?
 - How do the March of the Living and the March of Remembrance and Hope programs help to address the question?
- 3 What information do we learn from the book *Witness* that helps readers understand the passing of the torch of Holocaust memory to new generations?
 - What does "passing the torch of memory" mean to you?
- 4 Read Chapter Three: Who Resisted? And How?
 - After reading or listening to this chapter students can share their responses to "Who resisted? And How?"
 - Why is it important to resist in any situation where human rights are being trampled?
- 5 In Chapter Three, we learn stories of resistance amongst the Jewish people and those people who risked their lives to save Jews (i.e., Righteous Amongst the Nations).
 - Students can choose one story that best resonated for them and explain how this is a powerful story of courage.
 - Students can give reasons for their choices.
- 6 Draw students' attention to Chapter Six (pages 99-127) that features the "Faces of the March." Select one or more coloured photographs that serve as a record of the people who participated in the programs.
 - What do the expressions tell you about the feelings of those people?

What might these people be thinking?

Which photograph do you think might have been chosen to be featured on the cover of *Witness*?

- 7 Why is it important for people of different faiths, different cultures, and different generations to participate in the programs described in this book?
- 8 *Witness* is a resource that provides information with both text and photographs.
Which media helped you to reflect upon and better understand the stories of the past?
Encourage students to use specific examples from the book as they share their opinions.
- 9 Tell students to imagine that they are presenting this book to someone to read. Ask the students:
How might you summarize the book *Witness* in fifty words or less?
- 10 Tell the students to imagine that they've been given the opportunity to participate in one of these programs.
How might this program change your knowledge, your understanding, and your feelings about the Holocaust?
- 11 What are the titles of picture books, novels, historical fiction, movie and documentary films that have helped you to understand the Holocaust?
- 12 What is the most important lesson to be learned from the survivors of the Holocaust?


RESPONDING TO *WITNESS*

WITNESS Voices

Responding to Survivor Statements

Throughout *Witness*, many statements from survivors of the Holocaust provide testimony of remembrance. The following outline can be used to have students examine and respond to these quotations.

- 1 Display the quotations around the room and invite the students to move through the room reading the quotations.

- 2 Ask the students to stand beside the quotation that interests them.
What questions come to mind after reading this quotation?
Students can record their questions beside the quotation.
 Responses can be written on a chart or on post-it notes.
- 3 Ask the students to then stand beside the quotation that they feel best expresses the purpose of the programs. Students can share their reasons for choosing this quotation.
- 4 Following this activity, provide students with cards and ask them to write a quotation expressing their thoughts on the programs and this book. Their quotations can be placed in the room to share with the class.

*I never had a chance to say good-bye to my mother.
We didn't know we had to say good-bye. I am an old woman and I never made
peace with the fact that I never had that last hug and kiss. They say,
'When you listen to a witness, you become a witness.*
- Judy Weissenberg Cohen,
Survivor

*There are people whose brilliance continues to light the world though they are
no longer among the living. These lights are particularly bright when the night
is dark. They light the way for humanity.*
- Hannah Senesh,
Freedom Fighter Poet

*The tragic lessons and legacy must be passed on to the children so they can be
watchful, so they can be certain the world does not forget.*
- Bronka Krygier,
Survivor

*How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment
before starting to improve the world.*
- Anne Frank,
Victim of Holocaust

*Why do we return? We come to say, We are here, and with all our might and all
our strength, we proclaim on this very ground, with our bodies and our souls:
We remember and we shall always remember.*
- Sally Wasserman,
Survivor

It's love, not work, that sets us free.

~ David Matlow,
Survivor

Hearing my story, you young people become, in a way, our survivors. You must never, ever let this memory die—you must keep the torch burning. Because one day my generation will pass. Then, in your lifetime, when you hear someone say that the Holocaust did not happen, you can say:

I met a woman who was in Auschwitz and survived Auschwitz.

~ Trudy Album,
Survivor

I think the trip to Poland...forced us all to transcend our religious, political, and cultural boundaries in order to bear witness to the common humanity we all share. This common humanity is what should unite us when injustice is inflicted upon any one of us.


~ Ayesha Siddiqua Chaudhry,
Participant on March of Remembrance and Hope

I know that we cannot take care of all the world's injustices, but I urge you to at least identify one step that you can take toward making a positive difference, however small. This is how change begins.

~ Marie Mirlande Noel,
in a speech at the United Nations after the
trip to Concentration Camps in Europe

Raising Questions Inquiry

Ask the class to imagine that they will have the opportunity to interview a survivor of the Holocaust.

 In a small group brainstorm and select ten questions they would want to ask in the interview.


Have the students order the questions being sensitive to the challenges of the interview.

Groups can compare their lists with other groups.

Building Text to World Connections: Connecting the Past and Present

“As a survivor of 70 years when I see the world as it is today [I fear] we have not learned much from the past.”

~ Trudy Album


- a) Present this quotation to the students and ask them to explain why Trudy might feel this way.
- b) Do they know of present situations in the world where people are being denied their rights and freedoms, where people face racism or anti-Semitism, gender inequality or homophobia?
- c) Do we have organizations in the world today to protect citizens in these situations?
 Students can use their devices to learn more about one of these situations and share their findings with the class.

Interpreting Poetry: Response and Choral Dramatization

- a) Have the students read “Survivors” on page 64. (This activity could also be used with poems on pages 31, 64, and 87.) Responding to a poem:
 - Ask the students to notice and comment on the effectiveness of the repetition in the poem.
 - As a class, discuss for whom the author wrote the poem and identify the main idea she wants the reader to take away from this poem.
 - Ask the students to share the line of text that interested them and/or touched them. Encourage students to give reasons for their choices.
- b) Ask the students to read the poem aloud with a partner or in small groups. Ask the students to read together playing with volume and pace.
 - What words or lines should be read loudly or softly, quickly or slowly, paying attention to punctuation to express the meaning of the poem?
 - Invite the students to try a variety of ways to read aloud. Students can share their interpretations in small groups or with the class.

Expressing My Feelings:

Writing a poem

-  Invite the students to write a list or free verse poem that expresses their thoughts, reflections, and feelings that they've experienced through reading and discussing this book. To begin, they might respond to one of the following prompts:

I feel...

I remember/I will remember/I am reminded of...

I wonder...

I believe...


I hope...

-  Once completed, students can share their poems in small groups or with the class.

Listening and Viewing:


Inquiry

Have the students view *Survivor Testimony from the Archives of USC Shoah Foundation* and *March of the Living* following the instructions on the Table of Contents page.

-  Students can take notes while viewing and listening and share their research in small groups.

Invite students to compare their responses to reading a testimony and viewing and listening to Survivor Testimony.

Students can also investigate further information, testimonials, and photographs on the March of the Living and March of Remembrance and Hope websites.

-  Encourage students to also learn about **FAST, Fighting Anti-Semitism Together** and preserving and defending human rights of all people by visiting the Voices into Action website: <https://www.voicesintoaction.ca/Learn/Unit1/Overview>

FURTHER READING

Picture Books

- The Magician of Auschwitz* by Kathy Kacer; Illus. Gillian Newland
The Secret of the Village Fool by Rebecca Upjohn, Illus. Renne Benoit
The Promise by Pnina Bat Zvi and Margie Wolfe, Illus. Isabelle Cardinal
Fania's Heart by Anne Renaud, Illus. Richard Rudnicki

Historical Fiction

- The Ship to Nowhere: On Board the Exodus* by Rona Arato
The Choice by Kathy Clark
Shanghai Escape by Kathy Kacer
To Hope and Back: The Journey of the St. Louis by Kathy Kacer

Non-Fiction

- To look a Nazi in the Eye* by Kathy Kacer with Jordana Lebowitz
Hidden Gold: A True Story of the Holocaust by Ella Burakowski
Hana's Suitcase by Karen Levine (also: *Hana's Suitcase on Stage*)
The Underground Reporters by Kathy Kacer
When We Were Shadows by Janet Wees
Branded by the Pink Triangle by Ken Setterington
The Holocaust Remembrance Series for Young Readers Teacher Resource (Digital Edition) by Shawntelle Nesbitt